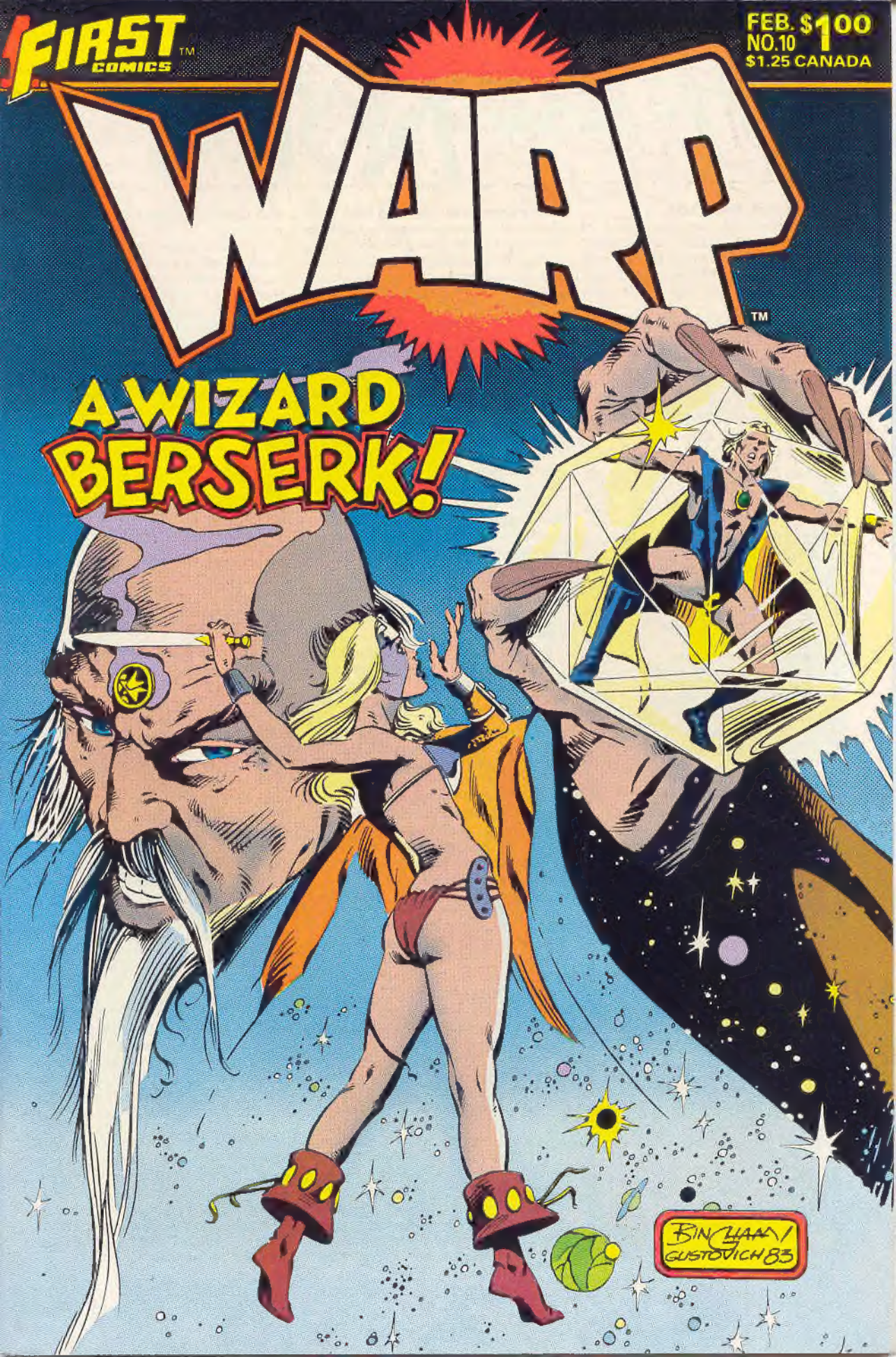
FIRST COMICS
FEB. $1.00
NO.10
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WARP
A WIZARD BERSERK!
BINGHAM/ GUSTOVICH 83

FIRST NOTES

FUNNY HOW TIME FLIES

It was nearly a year ago when I sat down at the typewriter to write the first First Notes column. At that time we were full of all sorts of hopes and dreams about this fantastic new comic book company.

Well, we're *still* full of hopes and dreams, but they're dreams about our new futures. We've had a fantastic year — in one short year, we've developed a reputation for on-time delivery with the highest production standards. We've worked with some of the best, and we've received their best work.

There are a lot of people to thank.

We've already noted — in house ads and in fanzines — the many artists, writers and staff people with whom we have worked. But there are still others: behind the scenes people who are equally responsible for our success. And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention as many of these fine folks as possible.

There are three guys who have been there right from the beginning, people who worked hand-in-glove with Rick, Rick and myself to get First Comics off the ground: Ken Levin, Ralph Musicant, and Jeff Stolberg. We owe them a hell of a lot more than just our thanks.

In addition to First's distributors and retailers, there are a whole mess of people without whom First could never have made it. This list includes Stuart Abelson, Adrienne Breen, Tom Brejcha, Terry Chapman, Myron Cherry, Lynn Danford, Ann DeLarye, Jeff Diemand, Russ Ernst, Agnes Felber, Barbara Felber, Angelo Frazone, Don Glickman, Art Greenberg, Bob Greenberger, Peggy Hoberg, Noah Levin, Robert Levin, Joel Levine, Dorothy Metrick, Harry Newberger, Linda Pollak, David Rosenthal, Lucy Southard, Daniel Sternberg, Max Traub, Katherine Turner, Donald Turner, Richard Ungaretti, Simon Zreczny, and Jack Zoldan.

Whew.

FINDING FIRST

If you've become used to finding **Warp** on sale along with **Jon Sable, Freelance** and **American Flagg!**, don't freak. Last month we shifted over to a new distribution system where you'll be finding new First Comics three out of every four weeks of each month. **Jon Sable, Freelance** and **American Flagg!** are released about the middle of the month, **Warp** and **Mars** the week after that, and **E-Man** and **Starslayer** come out the very end of each month.

If you're having any difficulties finding First Comics at your favorite outlet, please let us know. Write to Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager, First Comics, Inc., 1014 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201 — and, please, include the name and address of the comics shop in question.

MEETING THE MASSES

If pressed to do so, I guess we could come up with a complete list of conventions we've been to in the past three months. Let me give it a shot:

Indianapolis, Charlotte, New York, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Chicago, Memphis, Houston, San Diego, Atlanta, St. Louis. Whew. Not bad. Eleven conventions in about fourteen weeks. Lord knows where we got the time to continue publishing comics on-time.

Doing conventions is a blast. We greatly enjoy the opportunity to meet the people who keep us in business. More importantly, we enjoy the opportunity to *listen* to your thoughts — to your likes and dislikes, to your ideas and your concerns.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who visited us at the sundry summer conventions — as well as those of you who have visited us at our various comics shops appearances ... and those of you who have taken the effort to write to our various letters columns.

We want your input, and, believe me, we really listen to your comments.

— Mike Gold

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Bruce Patterson, Production Coordinator

Richard Felber, Business Manager
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

ON SALE NOW

American Flagg! #5: "Sudden Death Overtime," the second chapter of **Howard Chaykin's** Southern Comfort Saga. Flagg's in Cuba escorting the clandestine basketball team, and he's surrounded by thousands of fans — and thousands of killers. Some days, you just can't win.

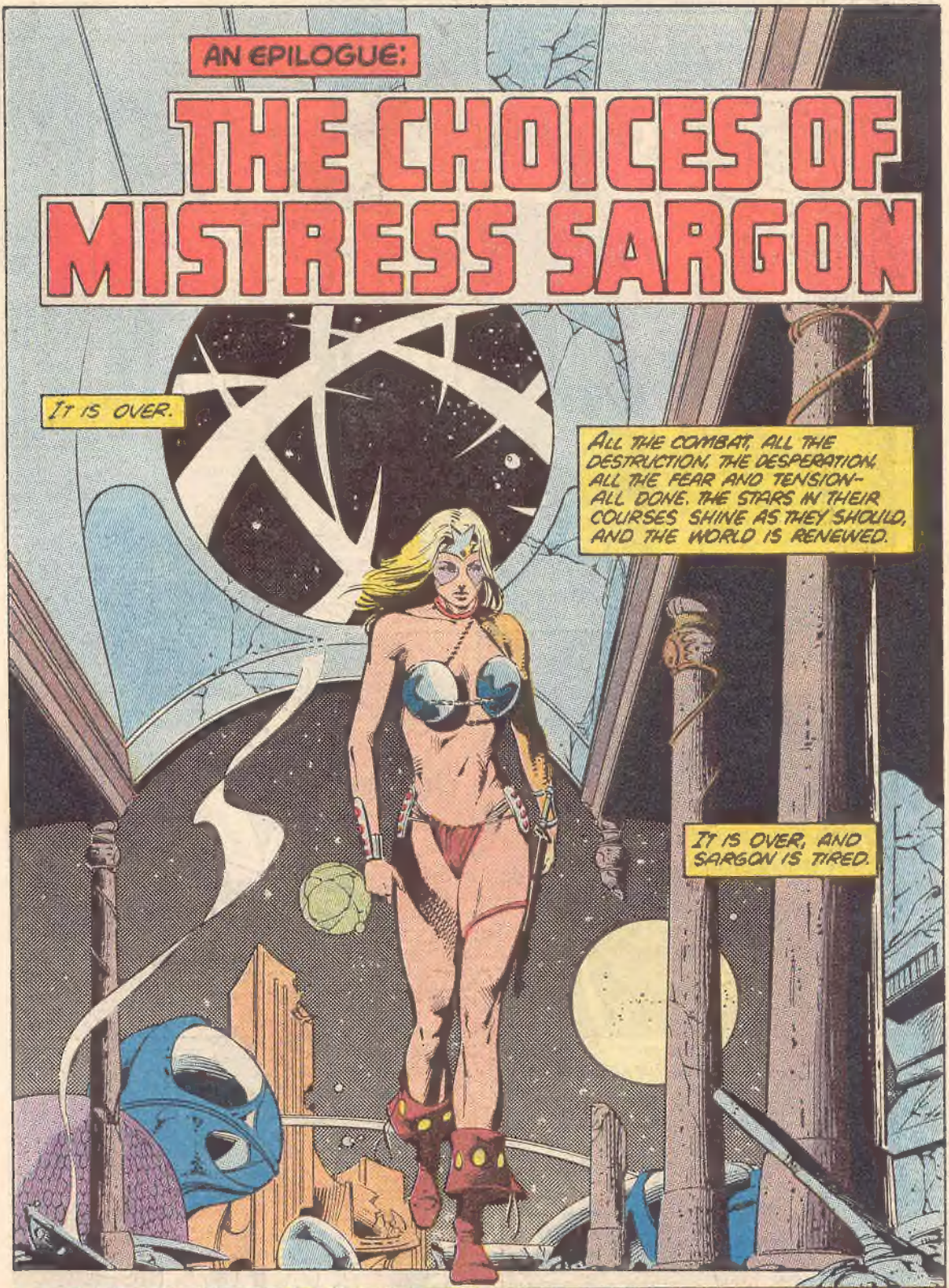
Jon Sable, Freelance #9: "Cliffhanger" — this time, with real cliffs. Now that Jon Sable has cleared his client of theft charges, he's just got enough time to prevent the nuclear destruction of New York City. **Mike Grell** concludes the two-parter.

Mars #2: Morgana explores her strange new world, but is totally unprepared to respond when "Mars Attacks!" **Mark Wheatley** and **Marc Hempel** continue this year's most innovative comic. Plus: the premiere of First's strangest superhero, The Black Flame — by **Peter Gillis, Tom Sutton** and **Bruce Patterson.**

ALSO FIRST IN OCTOBER

E-Man #11: The menace of Blacklung is nothing compared to "The Slug That Ate Barrentown!" Now that we know the secret of Nova Kane, will she live long enough to straighten out her life? **Joe Staton, Paul Kupperberg** and **Rick Burchett** provide the answers!

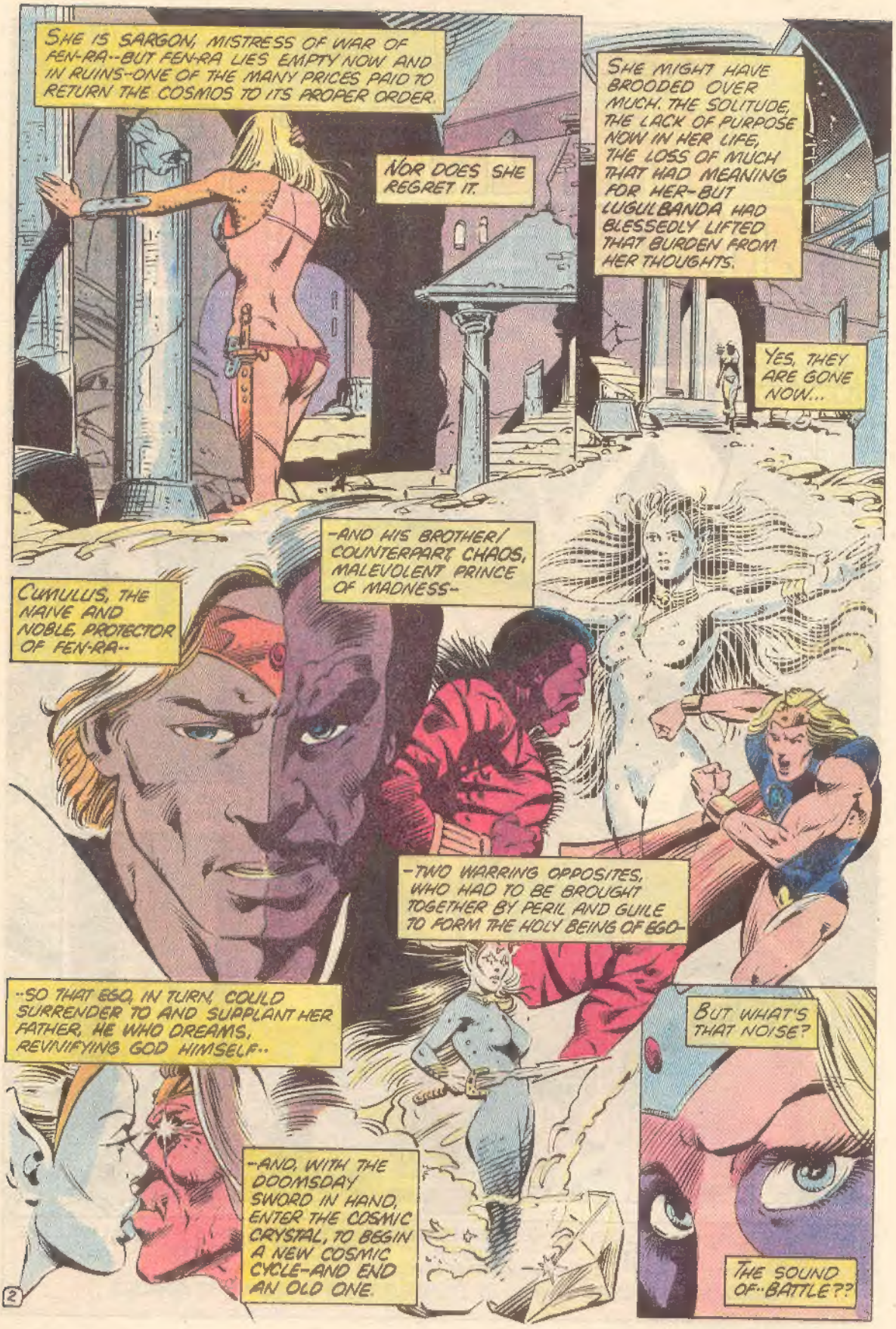
Starslayer #13: **John Ostrander, Lenin Delsol** and **Bruce Patterson** conclude our sundry plotlines in "Tamara Stands Alone!" Plus: the second part of the latest Grimjack thriller — and we do mean thriller — "Buried Past," by Ostrander and **Timothy Truman!**

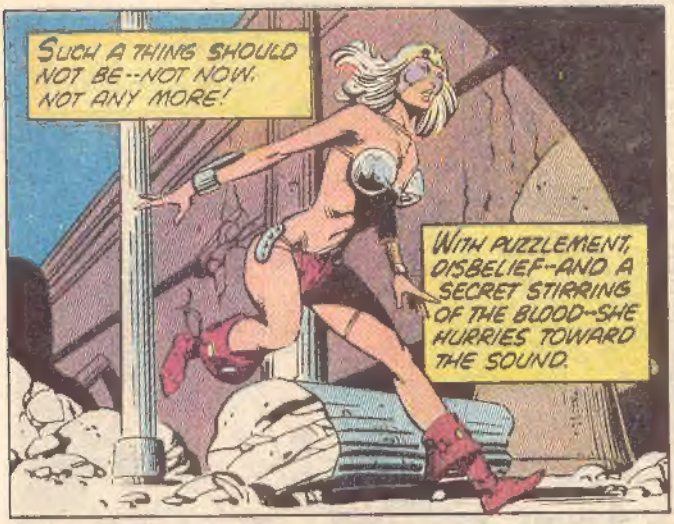


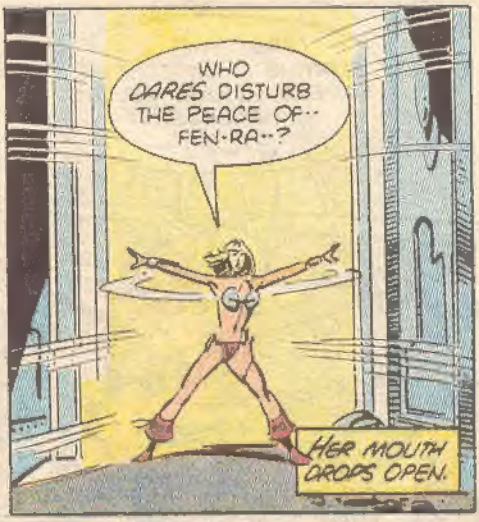
PETER B. GILLIS, WRITER • MIKE GUSTOVICH, INKER • KEN BRUZENAK, LETTERER • JANICE COHEN, COLORIST • MIKE GOLD, EDITOR • ALL WELCOME ABOARD

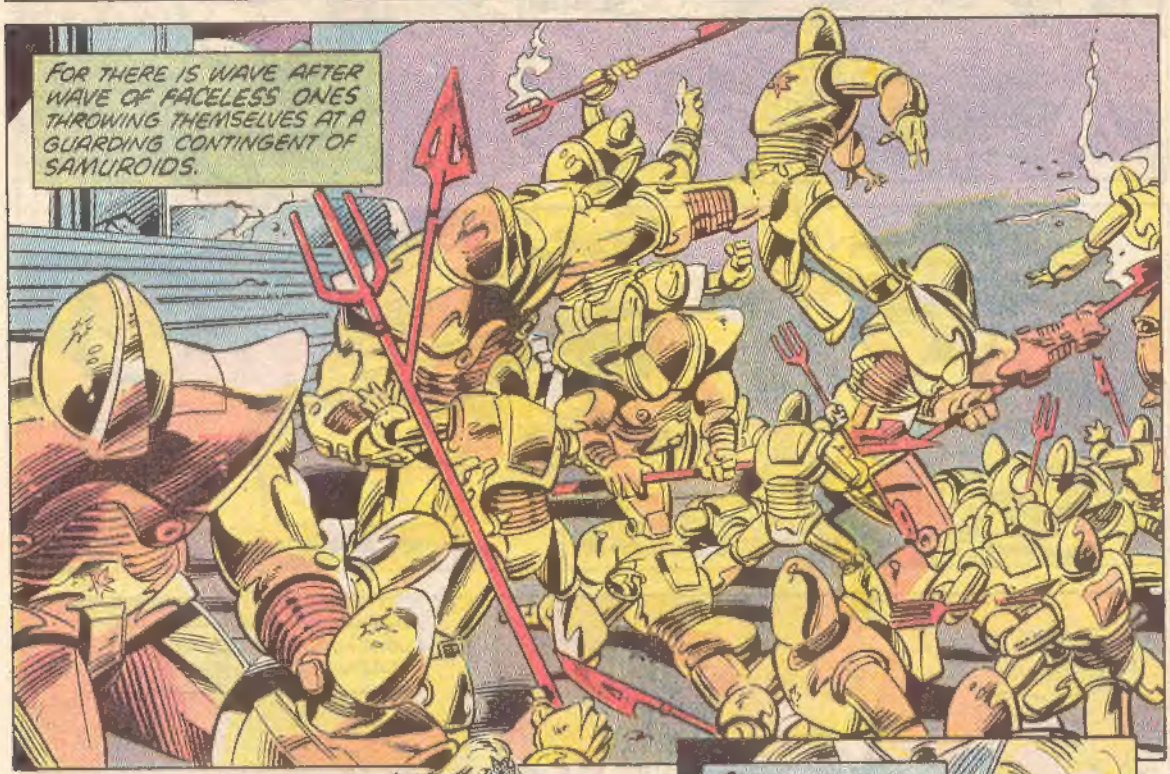
JERRY BINGHAM-PENCILLER

BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND

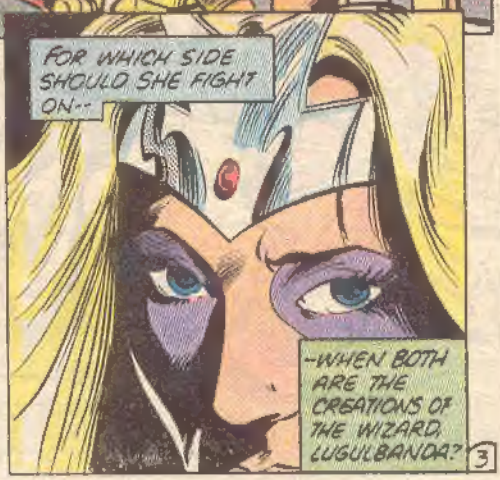

SHE IS SARGON, MISTRESS OF WAR OF FEN-RA--BUT FEN-RA LIES EMPTY NOW AND IN RUINS--ONE OF THE MANY PRICES PAID TO RETURN THE COSMOS TO ITS PROPER ORDER.
NOR DOES SHE REGRET IT.
SHE MIGHT HAVE BROODED OVER MUCH. THE SOLITUDE, THE LACK OF PURPOSE NOW IN HER LIFE, THE LOSS OF MUCH THAT HAD MEANING FOR HER--BUT LUGULBANDA HAD BLESSEDLY LIFTED THAT BURDEN FROM HER THOUGHTS.
YES, THEY ARE GONE NOW...
-AND HIS BROTHER/ COUNTERPART, CHAOS, MALEVOLENT PRINCE OF MADNESS--
CUMULUS, THE NAIVE AND NOBLE, PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA--
-TWO WARRING OPPOSITES, WHO HAD TO BE BROUGHT TOGETHER BY PERIL AND GUILE TO FORM THE HOLY BEING OF EGO-
--SO THAT EGO, IN TURN, COULD SURRENDER TO AND SUPPLANT HER FATHER, HE WHO DREAMS, REVIVIFYING GOD HIMSELF--
--AND, WITH THE DOOMSDAY SWORD IN HAND, ENTER THE COSMIC CRYSTAL, TO BEGIN A NEW COSMIC CYCLE-AND END AN OLD ONE.
BUT WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
THE SOUND OF--BATTLE??
2


SUCH A THING SHOULD NOT BE--NOT NOW. NOT ANY MORE!
WITH PUZZLEMENT, DISBELIEF--AND A SECRET STIRRING OF THE BLOOD--SHE HURRIES TOWARD THE SOUND.

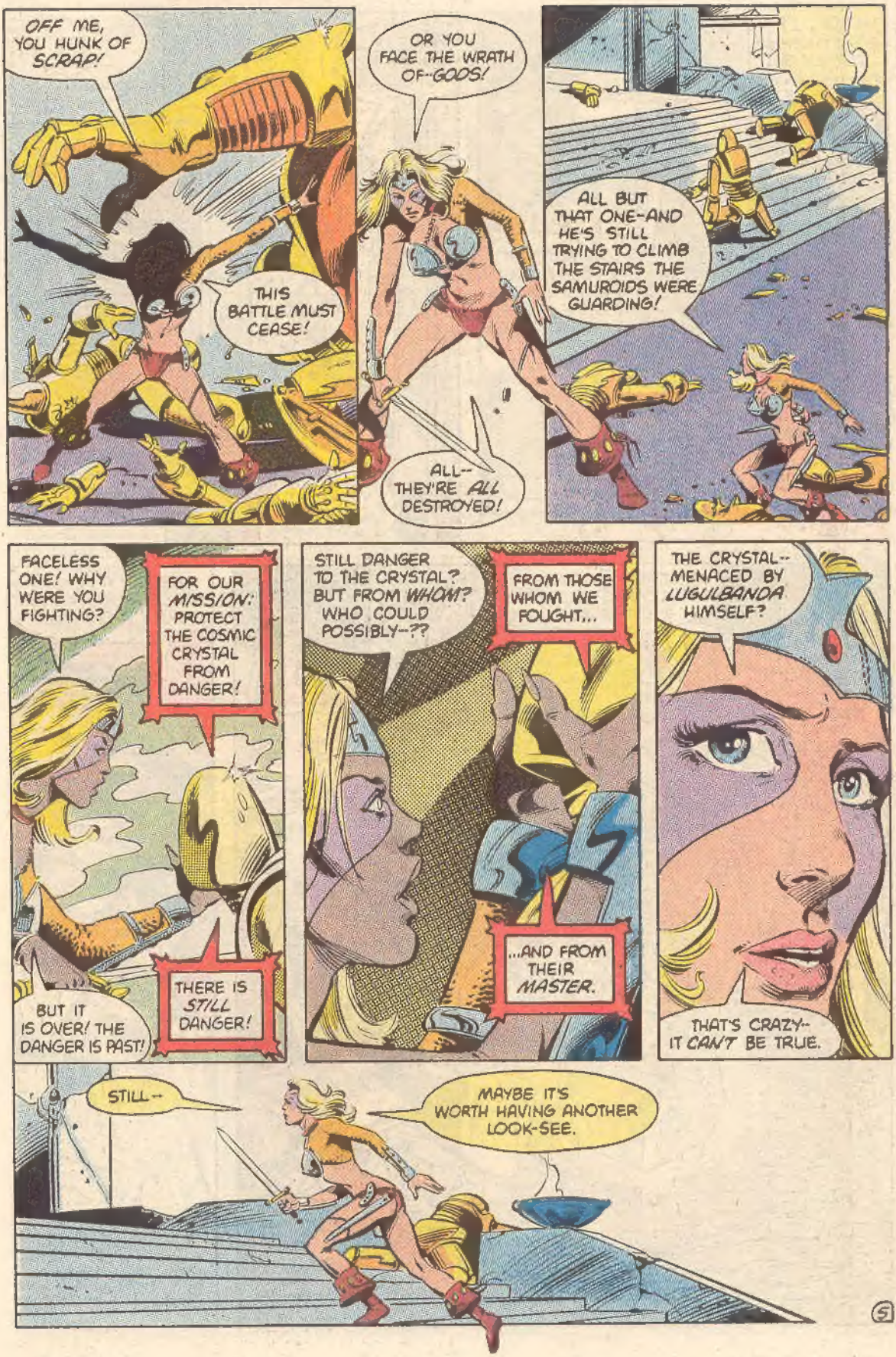

WHO DARES DISTURB THE PEACE OF-- FEN-RA--?
HER MOUTH DROPS OPEN.


FOR THERE IS WAVE AFTER WAVE OF FACELESS ONES THROWING THEMSELVES AT A GUARDING CONTINGENT OF SAMUROIDS.

HER SWORD LEAPS FROM ITS SCABBARD, AS HER BODY TENSES FOR BATTLE.
BUT SHE PULLS HERSELF UP SHORT.


FOR WHICH SIDE SHOULD SHE FIGHT ON--
--WHEN BOTH ARE THE CREATIONS OF THE WIZARD, LUGULBANDA?

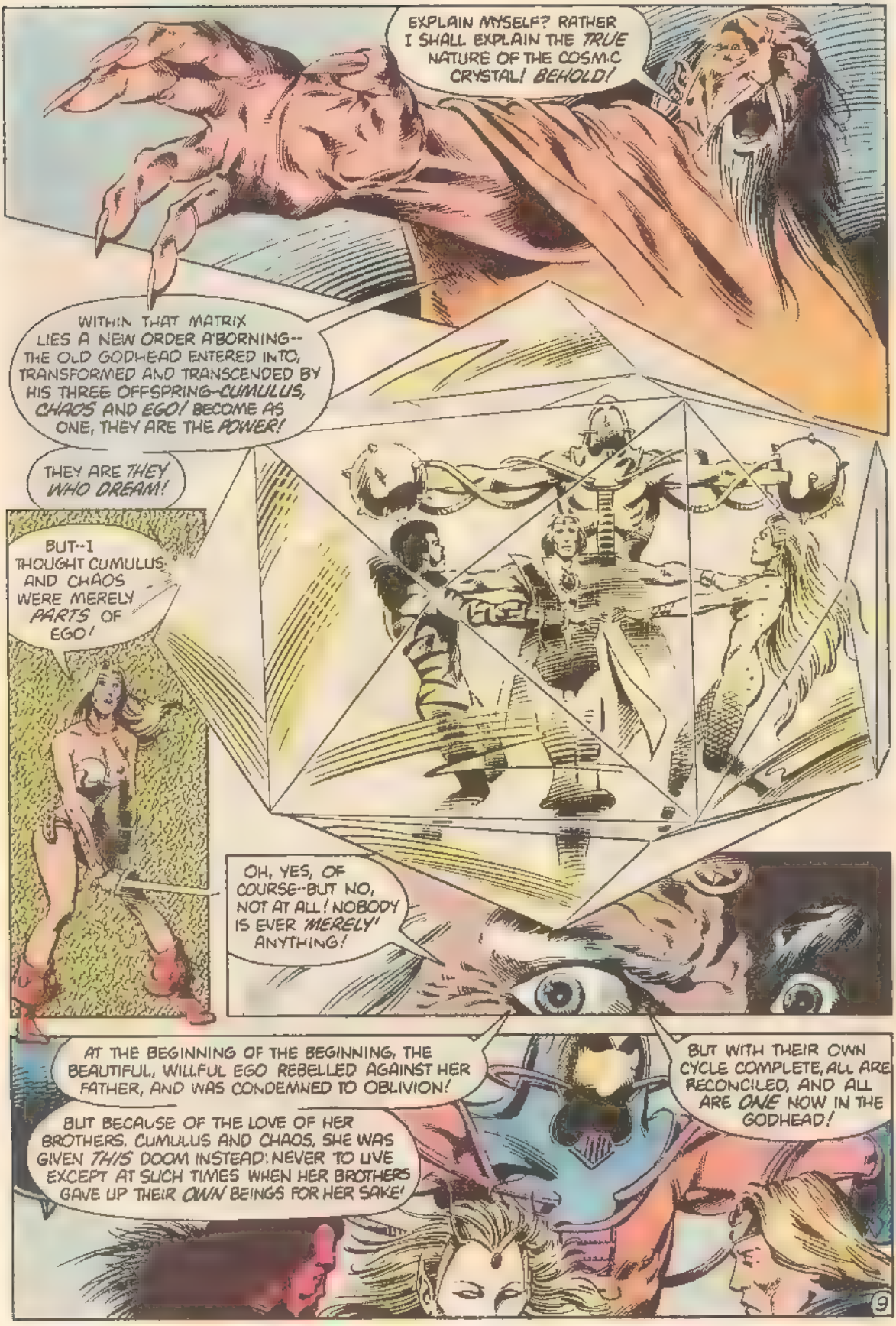
CEASE THIS FIGHTING AT ONCE! IN THE NAME OF LUGULBANDA, THIS IS SENSELESS! STOP!
DO NOT OPPOSE US.
YOU LUMBERING ROBOT MORON-
YOU DO NOT ORDER ABOUT THE MISTRESS OF WAR!
«SKEEEEK»
WHOOOOOM
WHAT LUNACY IS THIS? THEY'RE SLAUGHTERING EACH OTHER!
AND THE INEXORABLE CARNAGE CONTINUES-
KZLT!
SSSSSSSSS
-ALBEIT WITH DIMINISHING INTENSITY.


OFF ME, YOU HUNK OF SCRAP!
THIS BATTLE MUST CEASE!
OR YOU FACE THE WRATH OF--GODS!
ALL-- THEY'RE ALL DESTROYED!
ALL BUT THAT ONE--AND HE'S STILL TRYING TO CLIMB THE STAIRS THE SAMUROIDS WERE GUARDING!
FACELESS ONE! WHY WERE YOU FIGHTING?
FOR OUR MISSION: PROTECT THE COSMIC CRYSTAL FROM DANGER!
BUT IT IS OVER! THE DANGER IS PAST!
THERE IS STILL DANGER!
STILL DANGER TO THE CRYSTAL? BUT FROM WHOM? WHO COULD POSSIBLY--??
FROM THOSE WHOM WE FOUGHT...
...AND FROM THEIR MASTER.
THE CRYSTAL-- MENACED BY LUGULBANDA HIMSELF?
THAT'S CRAZY-- IT CAN'T BE TRUE.
STILL--
MAYBE IT'S WORTH HAVING ANOTHER LOOK-SEE.

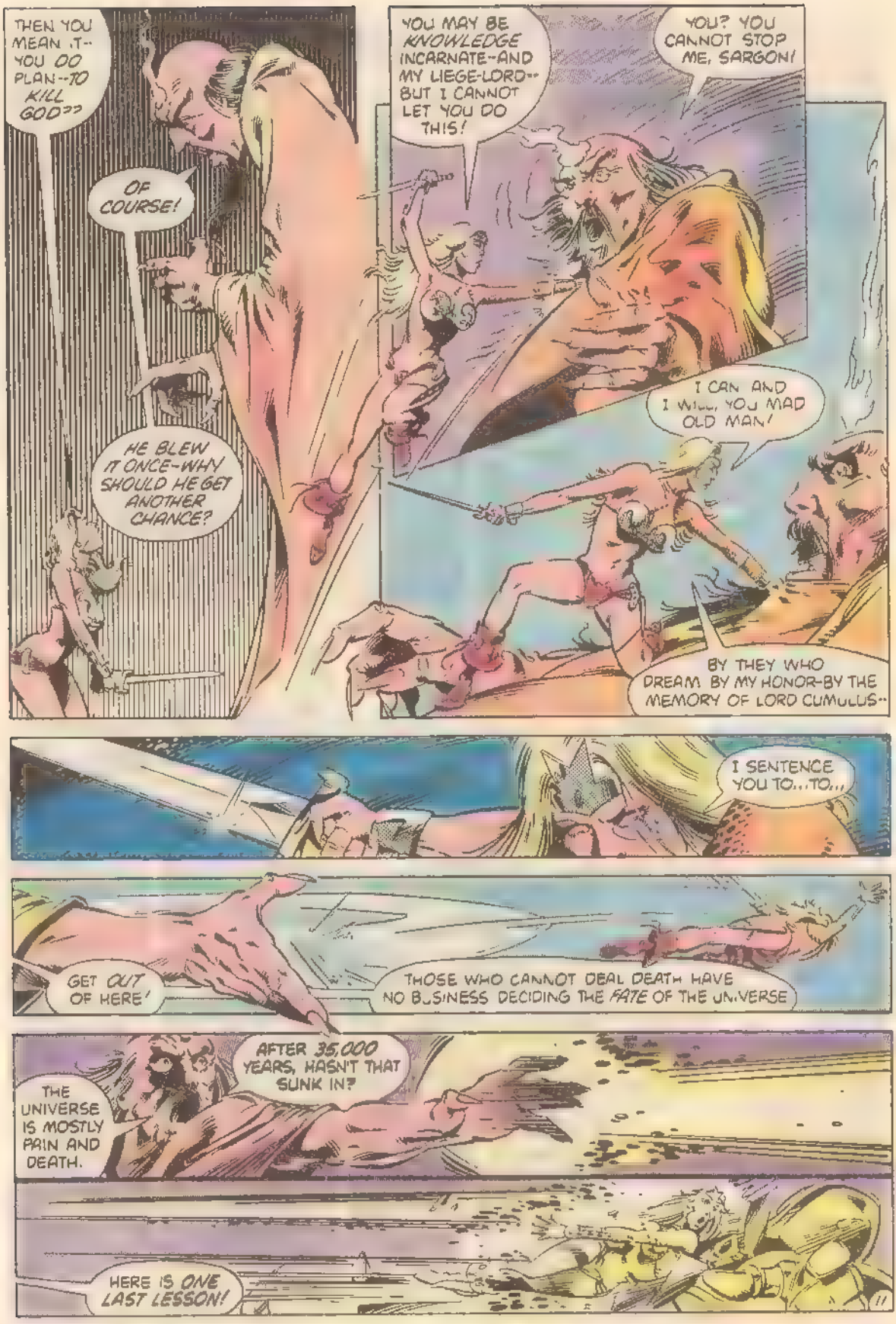
AFTER ALL-- IF THE FACELESS ONES ARE MALFUNCTIONING, IT MUST BE DEALT WITH!
A NICE RATIONALIZATION, I ADMIT--
BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY THE DOORS TO THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER ARE MYSTICALLY SEALED!
STILL, I HAVE SOME STRENGTH--
SO WE'LL SOON FIND OUT--
--WHAT--
--THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE??
MY LORD, WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THE CRYSTAL?
OH, HELLO, SARGON. IT'S NOTHING--
--MERELY A FEW MINOR ADJUSTMENTS. PURELY TECHNICAL.
NOW, PLEASE GO AWAY.
6

IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, LUGULBANDA, I'LL STAY HERE--
--UNTIL I'M SATISFIED YOU'RE NOT ENDANGERING THE CRYSTAL.
IT IS NEVER ALL THE SAME TO ME, MY DEAR--
--AND I'M AFRAID YOU MAY NOT STAY.
EJECT HER, AND-- OH, YES-- KEEP HER EJECTED.
YOU'RE MAKING IT HARDER TO SQUELCH MY SUSPICIONS, REVERED ONE--!
MY MENTAL BLASTS DON'T WORK! YOU'RE SHIELDING THEM! AGAINST ME!
MY LORD, I HAVE NO WISH TO RAISE ARMS AGAINST YOU--I REALLY DON'T--
--BUT YOU ARE LOOKING AT AN EXPERT...
OUT OF MY WAY, SAMUROID!
7

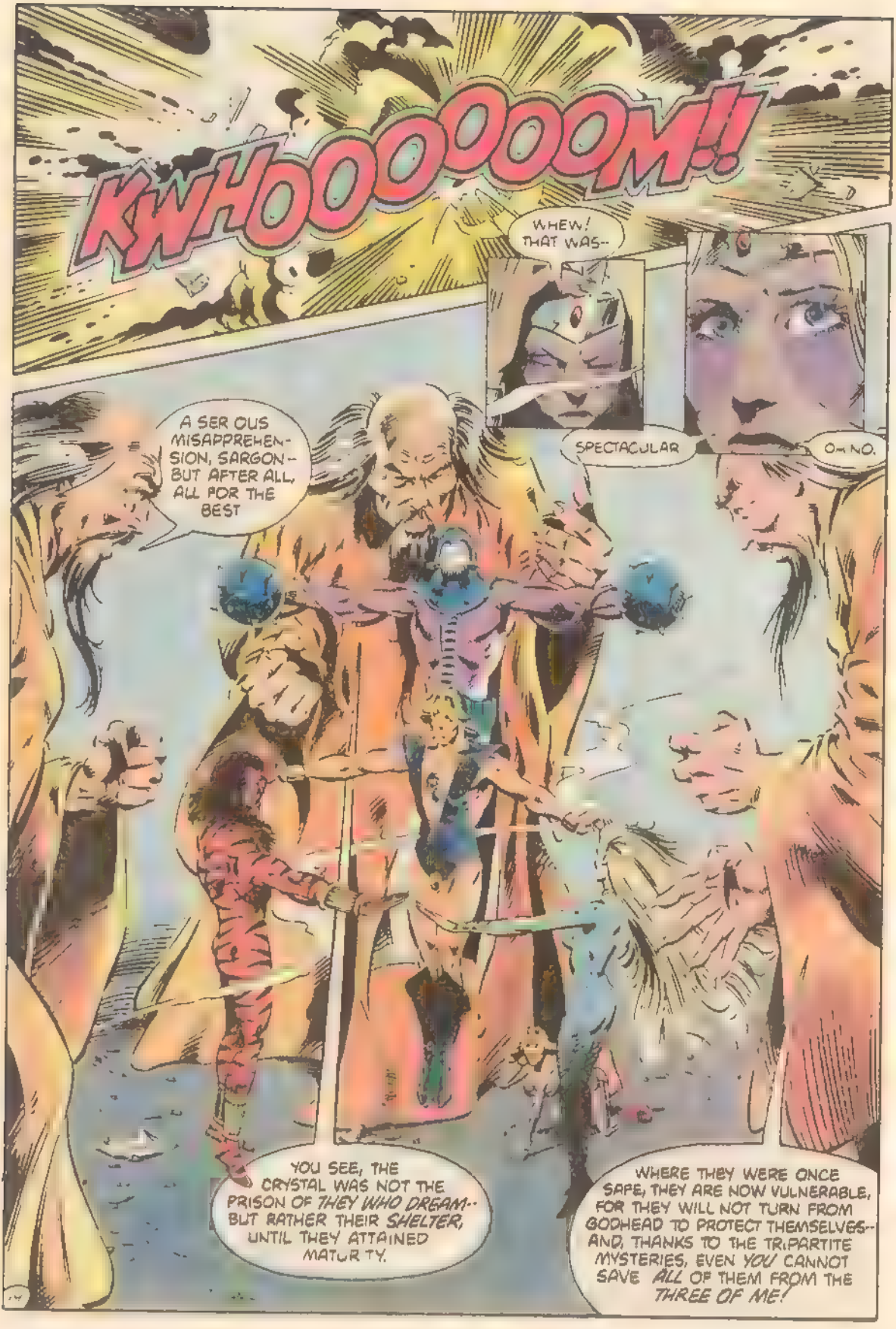
AND I HOPE YOU'LL PARDON MY TAKING MY METAPHOR A BIT TOO LITERALLY--
--BUT A SAMUROID'S OWN METAL ALLOY IS THE BEST POSSIBLE WEAPON-
--AGAINST ANOTHER ONE!
I'VE BEEN USING THIS TACTIC FOR MILLENIA, AND YOU NEVER LEARN!
NOOOOO! TOO SOON-- IT'S TOO SOON!
UGULBANDA! MASTER! WHAT IS IT?
THE CRYSTAL-- IT'S DOUBLED IN SIZE!
AND IT'S TOO SOON!
THEN YOU DO MEAN HARM TO THE CRYSTAL! ADMIT IT, OLD MAN!
YES--YES! BUT IT MAY ALL BE FOR NOTHING!
BUT WHY? EXPLAIN YOURSELF, DAMN YOU!
8

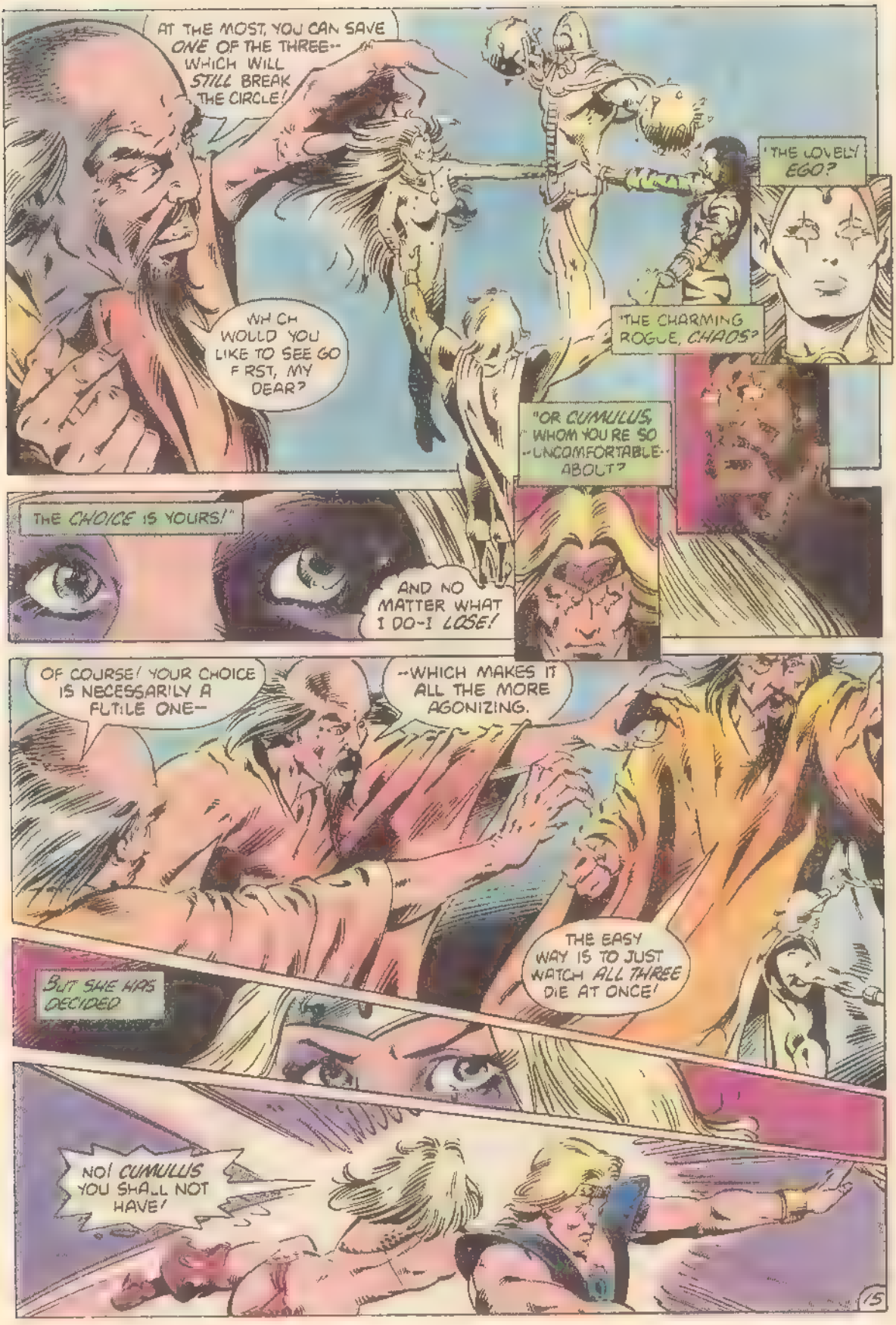

EXPLAIN MYSELF? RATHER I SHALL EXPLAIN THE TRUE NATURE OF THE COSMIC CRYSTAL! BEHOLD!
WITHIN THAT MATRIX LIES A NEW ORDER A'BORNING--THE OLD GODHEAD ENTERED INTO, TRANSFORMED AND TRANSCENDED BY HIS THREE OFFSPRING-CUMULUS, CHAOS AND EGO! BECOME AS ONE, THEY ARE THE POWER!
THEY ARE THEY WHO DREAM!
BUT--I THOUGHT CUMULUS AND CHAOS WERE MERELY PARTS OF EGO!
OH, YES, OF COURSE--BUT NO, NOT AT ALL! NOBODY IS EVER 'MERELY' ANYTHING!
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING, THE BEAUTIFUL, WILLFUL EGO REBELLED AGAINST HER FATHER, AND WAS CONDEMNED TO OBLIVION!
BUT BECAUSE OF THE LOVE OF HER BROTHERS, CUMULUS AND CHAOS, SHE WAS GIVEN THIS DOOM INSTEAD: NEVER TO LIVE EXCEPT AT SUCH TIMES WHEN HER BROTHERS GAVE UP THEIR OWN BEINGS FOR HER SAKE!
BUT WITH THEIR OWN CYCLE COMPLETE, ALL ARE RECONCILED, AND ALL ARE ONE NOW IN THE GODHEAD!

BUT--ISN'T THAT WHAT WE WANTED? ISN'T THAT WHAT WE SWEATED, FOUGHT, WENT THROUGH DEATH AND REBIRTH FOR?
WHAT WE WANT DOESN'T ENTER INTO IT ANYMORE AND THAT IS WHY I DO WHAT I DO.
THE CYCLE BEGINS ANEW! THEY WHO DREAM WILL SOON REMAKE THE COSMOS! BUT BY WHAT PLAN? AFTER WHAT DESIGN? WHO CAN UNDERSTAND THEIR WAYS?
WHAT IF THEY REFASHION A COSMOS WITHOUT FEN-RA--WITHOUT LUGULBANDA? THEY COULD SIMPLY EDIT ME OUT!! AND I WILL NOT HAVE THAT!
IT WAS NEVER TO HAVE BEEN THEY WHO DETERMINED THE SHAPE OF THINGS--THEY WERE NEVER SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN RECONCILED TO HE WHO DREAMS! BUT THINGS WENT WRONG!
THEN--YOU DID SEND THEM ON A SENSELESS QUEST FOR A R.NG WHICH NEVER EXISTED!
YOU MEANT FOR THEM--AND THE UNIVERSE--TO DIE!
THE UNIVERSE--BUT NOT THEM! IN THE CHAOS THAT FOLLOWED THE DEATH OF HE WHO DREAMS, EGO, IN POSSESSION OF THE DOOMSDAY SWORD WOULD BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO SURVIVE! AND I WOULD WIELD THE POWER OF INFINITY TO RESHAPE THE COSMOS AS I SAW FIT!
AND I STILL SHALL!
GODS OF FEN-RA --YOU RE GROWING!
10


THEN YOU MEAN IT-- YOU DO PLAN--TO KILL GOD??
OF COURSE!
HE BLEW IT ONCE--WHY SHOULD HE GET ANOTHER CHANCE?
YOU MAY BE KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE--AND MY LIEGE-LORD-- BUT I CANNOT LET YOU DO THIS!
YOU? YOU CANNOT STOP ME, SARGON!
I CAN AND I WILL, YOU MAD OLD MAN!
BY THEY WHO DREAM BY MY HONOR--BY THE MEMORY OF LORD CUMULUS--
I SENTENCE YOU TO...TO...
GET OUT OF HERE!
THOSE WHO CANNOT DEAL DEATH HAVE NO BUSINESS DECIDING THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE
AFTER 35,000 YEARS, HASN'T THAT SUNK IN?
THE UNIVERSE IS MOSTLY PAIN AND DEATH.
HERE IS ONE LAST LESSON!

YOU ARE NOT THE LUGULBANDA I KNEW.
BUT WHOEVER YOU ARE, SARGON WILL STOP YOU AT EVERY TURN.
THE LUGULBANDA YOU KNEW? SOME ABSENT-MINDED FOOL WHO WATCHED TV ALL THE TIME AND MIXED HIS METAPHORS?
WHAT DID YOU EVER KNOW OF ME, SARGON?
AT LEAST I ALWAYS KNEW YOU'D BE A LOUSY FIGHTER, REVERED ONE!
THAT HURT!
OF COURSE! THE SAMUROID'S ARMOR STILL HAD YOUR SHIELD-ENERGIES OVER IT! AND TURNABOUT'S FAIR PLAY!
AND NOW I'LL FINISH WHAT I HESITATED TO DO BEFORE!
FOOL! THE DARK FIRE NOW FLOWS THROUGH EVERY INCH OF ME!
FEEL IT AS IT BURNS THROUGH YOU—BURNS ALL YOU ARE AWAY!
I WON'T LET GO! I WON'T STOP! I WON'T GIVE UP!
EVEN IF THIS IS— THE END/ NEVER!
12

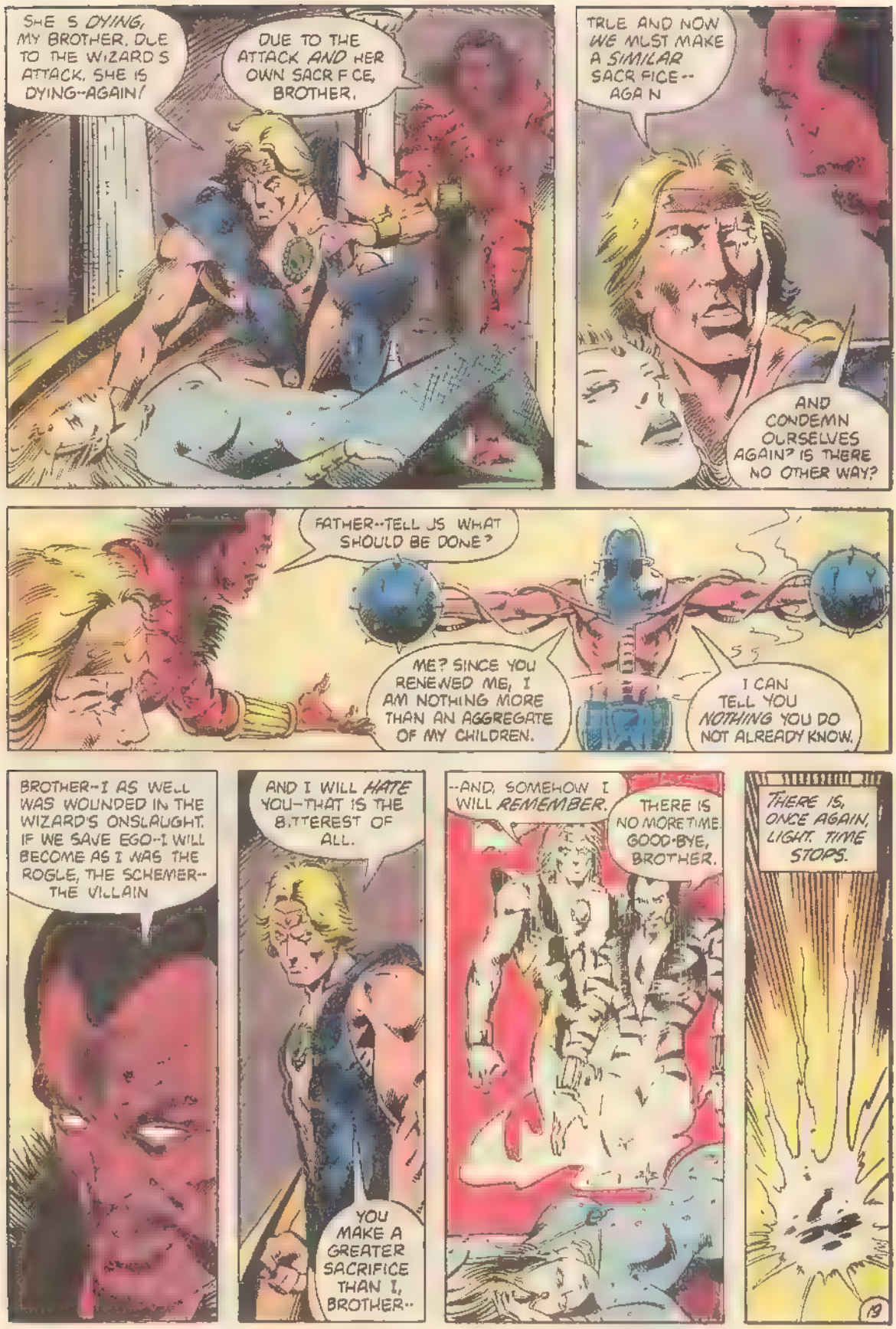

KWHOOOOOM!!
WHEW! THAT WAS--
SPECTACULAR
OH NO.
A SERIOUS MISAPPREHENSION, SARGON-- BUT AFTER ALL, ALL FOR THE BEST
YOU SEE, THE CRYSTAL WAS NOT THE PRISON OF THEY WHO DREAM-- BUT RATHER THEIR SHELTER, UNTIL THEY ATTAINED MATURITY.
WHERE THEY WERE ONCE SAFE, THEY ARE NOW VULNERABLE, FOR THEY WILL NOT TURN FROM GODHEAD TO PROTECT THEMSELVES-- AND, THANKS TO THE TRIPARTITE MYSTERIES, EVEN YOU CANNOT SAVE ALL OF THEM FROM THE THREE OF ME!

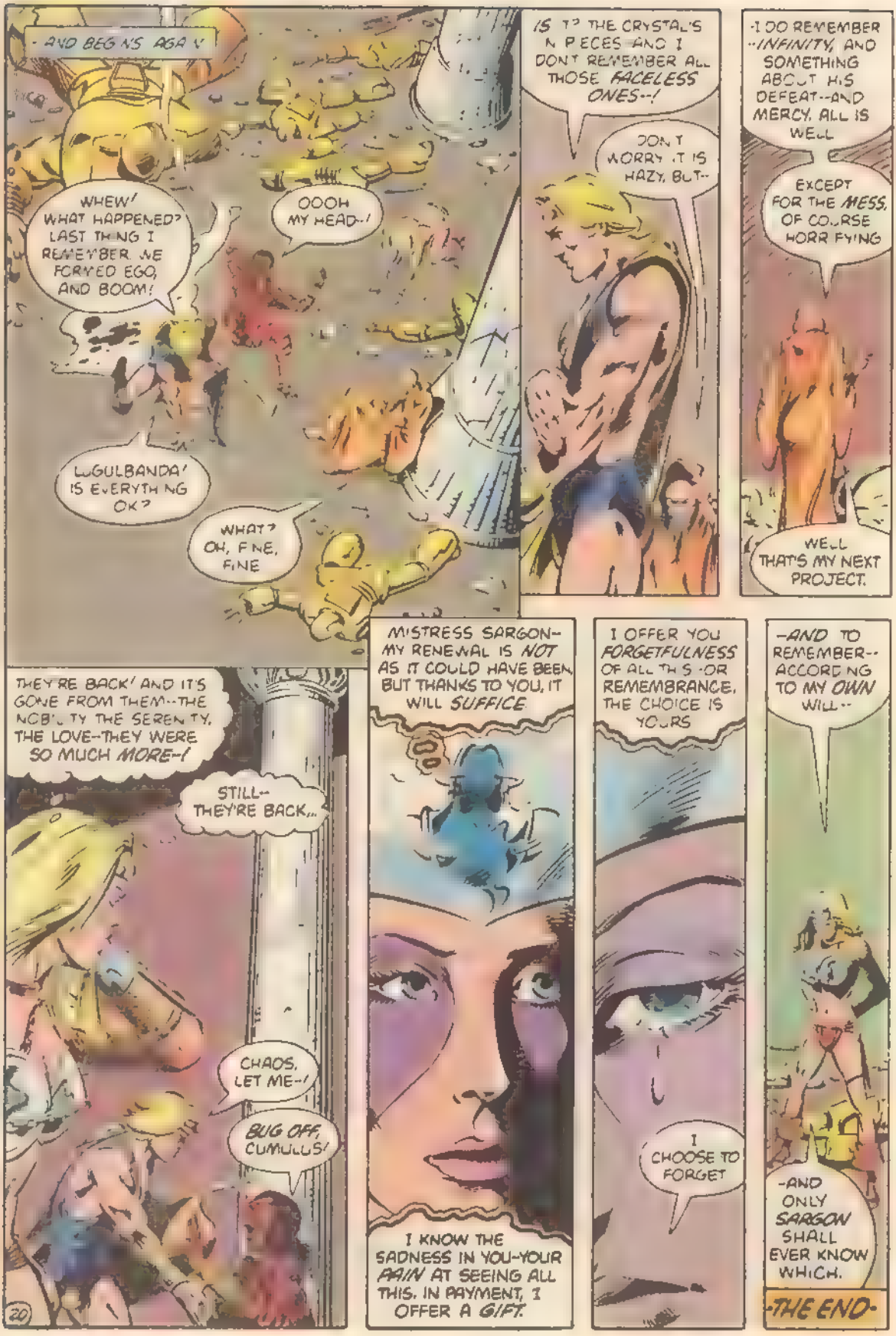

AT THE MOST, YOU CAN SAVE ONE OF THE THREE-- WHICH WILL STILL BREAK THE CIRCLE!
WH CH WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE GO F RST, MY DEAR?
'THE LOVELY EGO?
'THE CHARMING ROGUE, CHAOS?
"OR CUMULUS, WHOM YOU RE SO --UNCOMFORTABLE-- ABOUT?
THE CHOICE IS YOURS!"
AND NO MATTER WHAT I DO-I LOSE!
OF COURSE! YOUR CHOICE IS NECESSARILY A FUTILE ONE--
--WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE MORE AGONIZING.
THE EASY WAY IS TO JUST WATCH ALL THREE DIE AT ONCE!
BUT SHE HAS DECIDED
NO! CUMULUS YOU SHALL NOT HAVE!
15

IF THE WHOLE CRYSTAL PROTECTED THEM, THEN A SHARD WILL STILL DEFLECT WHATEVER ENERGIES YOU USE!
BUT TWO EQUAL BEAMS STRIKE THEIR TARGETS--
--AS HE-WHO-WAS-CHAOS WAVERS--
--AND SHE-WHO WAS EGO PALES--
--AND YET NONE OF THEM TURN FROM THEIR CIRCLE
THEY'RE UNDER ATTACK! WHY DON'T THEY DEFEND THEMSELVES?
BECAUSE, MY DEAR, THE GODHEAD IS SO ALL-CONSUMING AND BLISSFUL THAT IT IS GREATER TO THEM THAN BEING ITSELF!
AND IT IS THE ONLY REASON I WILL SUCCEED!
CUMULUS--I CAN ONLY STAND AND FIGHT--BUT YOU CAN DO MORE--YOU CAN PREVAIL!
I PRAY YOU --HEAR ME--!

AND CUMULUS TURNS!
FOR CAN PERFECTION BE ATTAINED WHILE PAIN YET EXISTS?
THAT ANSWER HAS NOT YET BEEN REVEALED
BUT HE SEES THE WOMAN STRUGGLE - FOR HIM--
-AND BREAKS THE CIRCLE!
FENRA ROCKS ON ITS FOUNDATIONS, AS THE NEW BIRTH IS SET INTO DOUBT--
--AND THREE FIGURES TURN OUTWARD
YOU HEARD! YOU DID HEAR ME!
NO! IT WAS NOT MEANT--
IT CAN'T BE-
PLEASE, NO!
THEY, BEFORE THE GLORY OF GOD--
-LUGULBANDA MELTS.
BEFORE THE WRATH OF GOD-
-LUGULBANDA BURNS-
7

AND BEFORE THE MERCY OF GOD-?
PLEASE--I NEVER MEANT EVIL--ONLY GOOD!
I DIDN'T HATE YOU--ONLY DOUBTED! I WAS AFRAID--!
AND ALL THIS, OF COURSE, IS KNOWN.
FOR ALL MY WISDOM, I DESPAIRED! I COULD NOT PUT MY LIFE IN YOUR HANDS WHAT COULD HAVE POSSESSED ME?
EGO - YOU'RE CHANGING! THE FEAR LEAVES ME--AND YOU TAKE UP THE BURDEN--
--OF INFINITY?!?
NOW I SEE! BECAUSE I WANTED MORE THAN THE ORDER OF HE WHO DREAMS--UNKNOWINGLY I EMBRACED HIS MORTAL ENEMY--THE CHAOS OF INFINITY!
EVEN KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE CAN FAIL YOU, MY LORD--I HAVE FAILED YOU. YOU MAY DESTROY ME--I GIVE MYSELF UP TO YOUR JUDGEMENT!
"UNNNH"
AND TWO FIGURES FALL TO THE GROUND, SPENT.

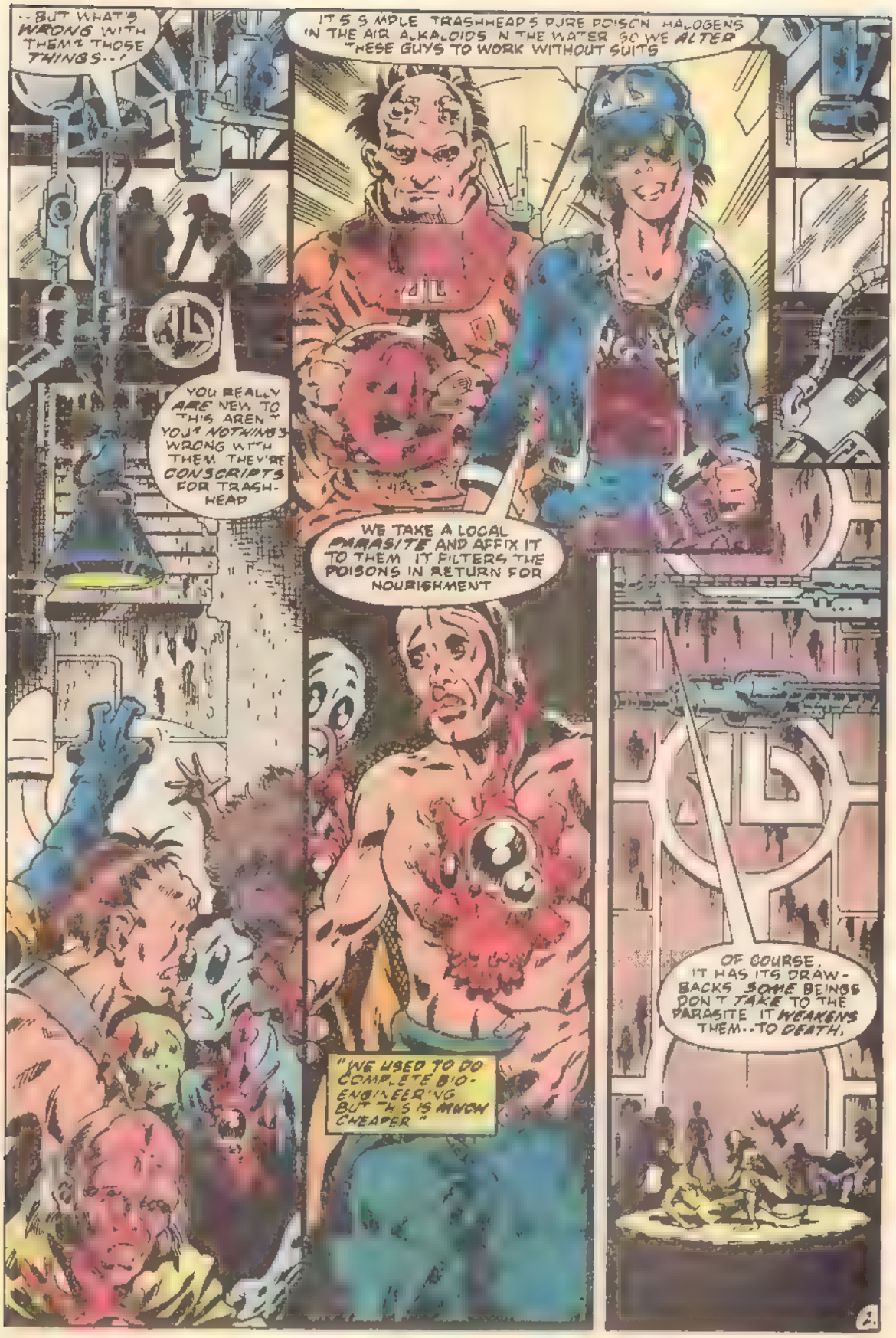

SHE S DYING, MY BROTHER. DUE TO THE WIZARD S ATTACK, SHE IS DYING--AGAIN!
DUE TO THE ATTACK AND HER OWN SACR F CE, BROTHER.
TRUE AND NOW WE MUST MAKE A SIMILAR SACR FICE-- AGA N
AND CONDEMN OURSELVES AGAIN? IS THERE NO OTHER WAY?
FATHER--TELL JS WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?
ME? SINCE YOU RENEWED ME, I AM NOTHING MORE THAN AN AGGREGATE OF MY CHILDREN.
I CAN TELL YOU NOTHING YOU DO NOT ALREADY KNOW.
BROTHER--I AS WELL WAS WOUNDED IN THE WIZARD'S ONSLAUGHT. IF WE SAVE EGO--I WILL BECOME AS I WAS THE ROGLE, THE SCHEMER-- THE VILLAIN
AND I WILL HATE YOU--THAT IS THE 8,TTEREST OF ALL.
YOU MAKE A GREATER SACRIFICE THAN I, BROTHER--
--AND, SOMEHOW I WILL REMEMBER.
THERE IS NO MORE TIME. GOOD-BYE, BROTHER.
THERE IS, ONCE AGAIN, LIGHT. TIME STOPS.
19

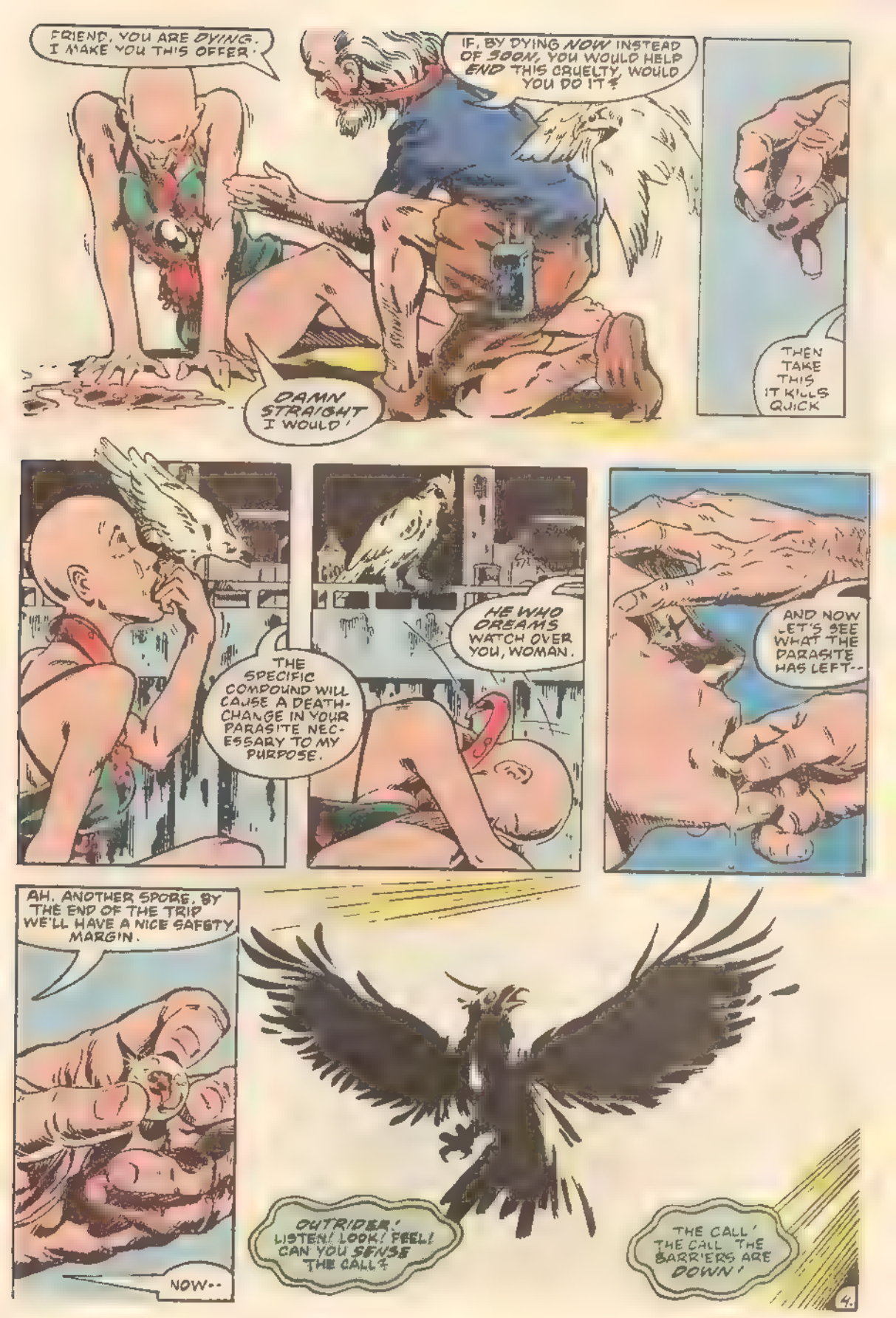

- AND BEGINS AGAIN
WHEW! WHAT HAPPENED? LAST THING I REMEMBER WE FORMED EGO, AND BOOM!
OOOH MY HEAD--!
LUGULBANDA! IS EVERYTHING OK?
WHAT? OH, FINE, FINE
IS IT THE CRYSTAL'S IN PIECES AND I DON'T REMEMBER ALL THOSE FACELESS ONES--!
DON'T WORRY, IT IS HAZY, BUT--
-I DO REMEMBER -INFINITY, AND SOMETHING ABOUT HIS DEFEAT--AND MERCY. ALL IS WELL
EXCEPT FOR THE MESS, OF COURSE HORRIFYING
WELL THAT'S MY NEXT PROJECT.
THEY'RE BACK! AND IT'S GONE FROM THEM--THE NOBILITY THE SERENITY, THE LOVE--THEY WERE SO MUCH MORE--!
STILL-- THEY'RE BACK...
CHAOS, LET ME--!
BUG OFF, CUMULUS!
MISTRESS SARGON-- MY RENEWAL IS NOT AS IT COULD HAVE BEEN, BUT THANKS TO YOU, IT WILL SUFFICE
I KNOW THE SADNESS IN YOU-YOUR PAIN AT SEEING ALL THIS. IN PAYMENT, I OFFER A GIFT.
I OFFER YOU FORGETFULNESS OF ALL THIS -OR REMEMBRANCE. THE CHOICE IS YOURS
I CHOOSE TO FORGET
-AND TO REMEMBER-- ACCORDING TO MY OWN WILL--
-AND ONLY SARGON SHALL EVER KNOW WHICH.
-THE END-
20

OUTRIDER™

PETER B. GILLIS STORY | BILL WILLINGHAM PENCILS | HILARY BARTA INKS | PETER IRO LETTERS | JANICE COHEN COLORS | MIKE GOLD ED.TOR

FEATURING CONCEPTS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND

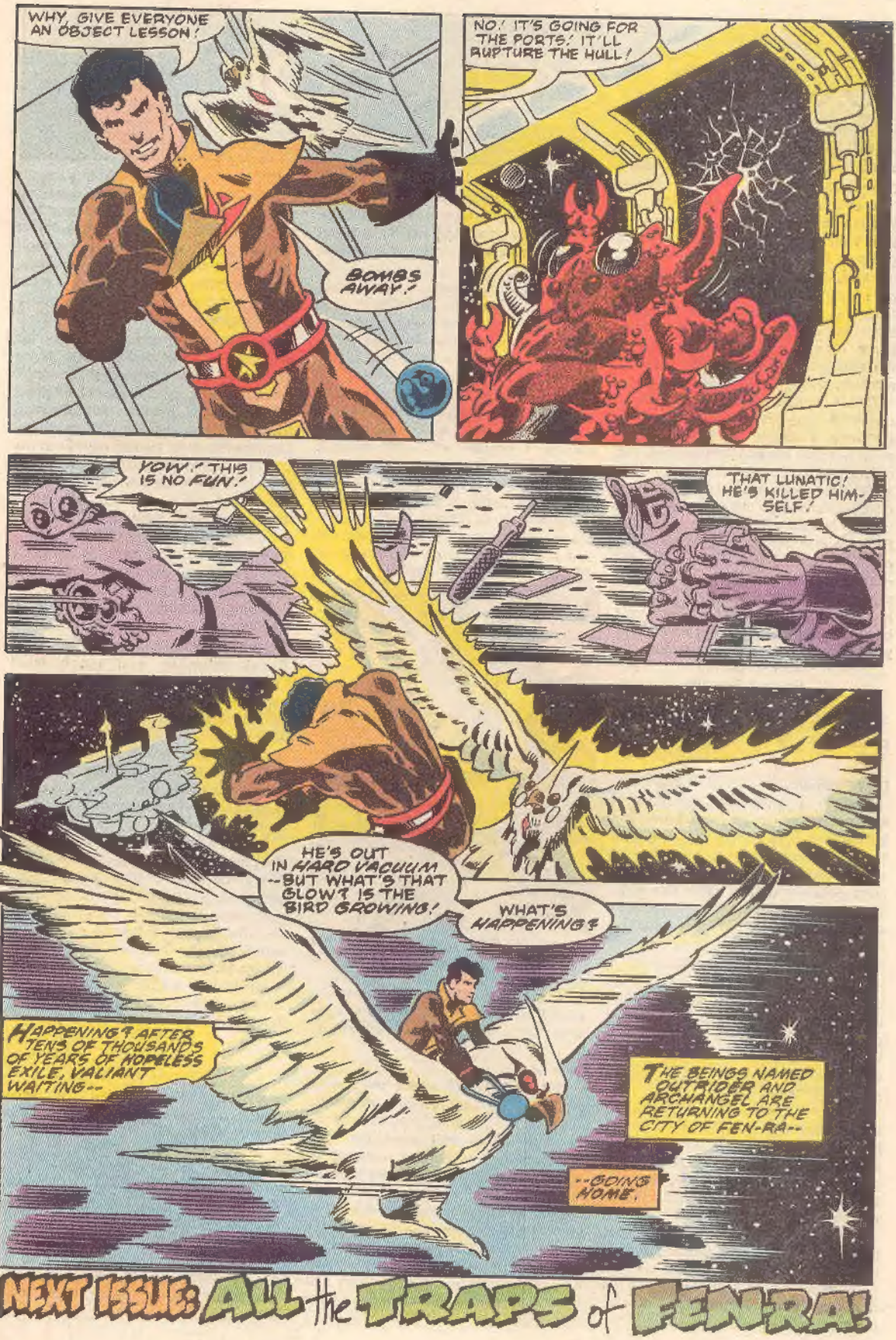

..BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM? THOSE THINGS..!
YOU REALLY ARE NEW TO THIS AREN'T YOU? NOTHING'S WRONG WITH THEM THEY'RE CONSCRIPTS FOR TRASHHEAD
IT'S SIMPLE TRASHHEAD'S PURE POISON HALOGENS IN THE AIR ALKALOIDS IN THE WATER SO WE ALTER THESE GUYS TO WORK WITHOUT SUITS
WE TAKE A LOCAL PARASITE AND AFFIX IT TO THEM IT FILTERS THE POISONS IN RETURN FOR NOURISHMENT
"WE USED TO DO COMPLETE BIO-ENGINEERING BUT THIS IS MUCH CHEAPER"
OF COURSE, IT HAS ITS DRAWBACKS SOME BEINGS DON'T TAKE TO THE PARASITE IT WEAKENS THEM..TO DEATH.
2.


FRIEND, YOU ARE DYING. I MAKE YOU THIS OFFER.
IF, BY DYING NOW INSTEAD OF SOON, YOU WOULD HELP END THIS CRUELTY, WOULD YOU DO IT?
DAMN STRAIGHT I WOULD!
THEN TAKE THIS IT KILLS QUICK
THE SPECIFIC COMPOUND WILL CAUSE A DEATH-CHANGE IN YOUR PARASITE NECESSARY TO MY PURPOSE.
HE WHO DREAMS WATCH OVER YOU, WOMAN.
AND NOW LET'S SEE WHAT THE PARASITE HAS LEFT--
AH. ANOTHER SPORE. BY THE END OF THE TRIP WE'LL HAVE A NICE SAFETY MARGIN.
NOW--
OUTRIDER! LISTEN! LOOK! FEEL! CAN YOU SENSE THE CALL?
THE CALL! THE CALL! THE BARRIERS ARE DOWN!
4.

MY GOD YOU'RE RIGHT! THE COSMIC CRYSTAL --IT'S FREED!
WE CAN RETURN!!
WHAT GOES ON, OLD ONE?
BIRD'S ON FIRE--!
NOTHING'S THE MATTER, FRIENDS--
--HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE
MERELY THAT THIS LITTLE DISGUISE--
NOW WE STRIKE BACK!
I AM OUTRIDER, NOBLE OF FEN-RA. I AM HERE TO HELP YOU DESTROY THIS WHOLE HORRIBLE SYSTEM
FOR YEARS I HAVE WALKED AMONG YOU PREPARING THIS PLAN. BUT NOW THE TIME FOR WAITING IS PAST. ARE YOU WITH ME?
WE ARE. BUT HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
WITH THESE--
--THE PAYMENT OF YOUR COMRADES' DEATHS!

NOW STAND BACK
ONCE THE SPORE IS JARRED--
--IT HATCHES QUICKLY--
--AND GROWS EVEN FASTER!
AND AS YOU CAN SEE IT DOESN'T LIKE CONFINEMENT ANY MORE THAN WE DO!
NOW ONWARD, ALL OF YOU--OXYGEN'S HIGHER OUT THERE--
BUT STAY AWAY FROM THE THING'S CLAWS! IT'S DANGEROUS!
YOU BET, HIP HIP.
EXCUSE US--
--I HOPE--
--WE'RE INTERRUPTING SOMETHING?
HELLO, THE BRIDGE?

I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO SURRENDER ALL CONTROL OF THIS SHIP. I'M ASSUMING COMMAND.
ARE YOU KIDDING? WITH THIS BUNCH?
YOU'LL JUST BE ARRESTED WHEN YOU REACH PLANET-FALL. IT'S USELESS.
BESIDES, YOU CAN'T RUN A SHIP LIKE THIS-- LAYMEN!
OH, WE'RE CAPABLE. BUT I DON'T JUST INTEND TAKING OVER ONE SHIP--I'M ENDING THIS WHOLE COMMERCIAL OPERATION!
IN THIS BAG I HAVE SPORES--SPORES THAT CREATE THE MATURE FORM OF THE ORGANISMS YOU USE AS PARASITES! YOU'LL FIND A MATURE FORM TEARING UP YOUR SHIP'S INNARDS EVEN NOW.
I'M GIVING MY FRIENDS ENOUGH SPORES TO WRECK YOUR ENTIRE FLEET--IF YOU DON'T GIVE UP THIS BARBARIC PRACTICE!
I WANT FULL COMM-LINK WITH ALL SHIPS IN THE FLEET. FRIENDS-- GET OUT OF HERE. SEAL THE DOORS.
IT-- IT'S DONE. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
7.


WHY, GIVE EVERYONE AN OBJECT LESSON!
BOMBS AWAY!
NO! IT'S GOING FOR THE PORTS! IT'LL RUPTURE THE HULL!
YOW! THIS IS NO FUN!
THAT LUNATIC! HE'S KILLED HIMSELF!
HE'S OUT IN HARD VACUUM --BUT WHAT'S THAT GLOW? IS THE BIRD GROWING!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
HAPPENING? AFTER TEN'S OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF HOPELESS EXILE, VALIANT WAITING--
THE BEINGS NAMED OUTRIDER AND ARCHANGEL ARE RETURNING TO THE CITY OF FEN-RA--
--GOING HOME.
NEXT ISSUE: ALL the TRAPS of FEN-RA!

warped words

%FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

Dear Warpers:

What can one say about Warp #6 and Warp in general? Let's see, how do I do this? Wait a minute! I got it! It's dramatic ("Behold Ego!"). It's funny ("Sign here, my lord." Even wizards must keep the books tidy). It's sexy (See Sargon. Ahhh, Sargon — I think I'm in love). It's visually stunning. It's printed on high quality paper. It's only a dollar — a bargain for the excellence the fans get. And it's monthly, too!!

That is another subject I would like to comment on. First is the only new company I know of that actually publishes their titles on time, whereas the others have to struggle to make sure their books are only three or four months late. Congratulations on this magical feat.

Warp and all your other First Comics titles are absolutely perfect. What more can a fan want? That's simple to answer — work that is above and beyond perfection. You guys are good, but there is always room for improvement. Don't become complacent in your success or you will soon not be so successful.

Mark C. Gentry
Route 2, Box 185
London, KY 40741

Words to live by, Mark. But "beyond perfection?"

Dear Firstborn,

First — I must say, on pain of embarrassment (for you — not me), that for me and First Comics it was love at first sight. For one thing, there are so many Marvelous, Deliciously Convicting puns possible with a name like First. Something that sparked the romance was the sight of glaring white twinkling across the tops of all the other books in my treasure box of comical delights.

But let's get sPacific (sic). After opening my First book I was ready to tie the knot. I seem to get lost in Warp. Not that I don't like it, I love it. It makes me wish I could see the play. Especially if the actors wore those costumes as well as you say. Nice art.

As for #6. Thanks for wasting Xander and conquering the Unconquerable. He had me scared. Besides, I was tired of seeing his ugly face and long fingernails on the covers. Warp, for me, has now become more than just a collector's item. It is enjoyable to read.

Chaos is my favorite character, but then I liked Darth Vader, too. The Sargon backup is good — I find it slightly humorous. "I hate bugs" was just the right thing to say. Annubik and Kaness put a smile on my face every time.

Keep up the good stories and get rid of Valaria. She makes me sick!

By the way, it's great to see something different and good. Actually, it's great to write to someone in Illinois, as opposed to New York.

Watch out for snakes.

Brent "Zapper" Davis
404 S. Elk Avenue
Fayetteville, TN 37334

We always watch out for snakes. I think there's one in my word processor.

The actors really do fill out those costumes quite nicely. Whenever we get a letter proclaiming a reader's love for Sargon, I wonder what the reader's reaction would be to seeing her live, on stage.

As of this writing, the plays are still going strong in Detroit — they were scheduled to close last month, but I'm told if a scheduling conflict could be worked out it'll be kept going. And the plays are due to open in San Francisco before too long.

Did we get rid of Valaria fast enough for you? If any of you people out there are ticked off, write to Zapper. It's his fault.

Dear Editor,

This issue's (#6) attack on Fen-Ra offered some very exciting moments. The fear, anxiety and desperation of the characters was well presented. The opposite (yet common) natures of Cumulus and Chaos continues to be an interesting bit of characterization. I cannot tag Chaos as a mere supervillain, just as I do not really think of Cumulus as a hero in the standard superhero sense of the word. These men too often seem to have no choice in what they do and occasionally seem too much like actors forced into roles.

Cumulus, as evidenced in this issue's execution sequence, is not as accomplished in his part as is Chaos. The somewhat reluctant nature of this almost cosmic puppet-show (I am sure several of the characters have, at different times, had his manipulated feeling) is one of the things that gives this adventure a sense of difference.

My criticism of this segment of the saga lies in the dispatching of the awesomely powerful threat of Xander (if, indeed, he is really dead?). Xander seemed worthy of a greater battle than this flick-of-the-wrist-like defeat, even by Lugulbanda. Also, I would have liked the concept behind Ego to have been explained more clearly. At times this issue read like a politician answering direct questions. Why would the true selves of two males of opposite natures and opposing forces synthesize into a female persona? Ego's fade to black was left with precious too little comment.

Saving something for a rainy day, aren't you?

The artistry, while it seemed a little less Frank Brunner and more Mike Gustovich, was, again, of high quality. I especially like the portrayal of Sargon.

This issue's second story was really very good. John Ostrander is showing fine promise as a new writer. I like the way he handles dialogue and his characterizations are lively. Sargon is developing into a darn good sword-and-sorcery heroine.

Bruce Patterson is one of comicdom's best inkers. His skills give the talented Lenin Delsol's pencils a touch of professional class. Lenin is obviously very talented in his own right, but together he and Patterson produce an artistic quality that makes Delsol look like an acclaimed veteran. I think Lenin is a terrific new artistic discovery and it's nice to have him as part of the comic book medium.

Wallace Lee Hopkins
Box 428
Glen Carbon, IL 62034

If you'd like to get a look at Lenin's inks, check out the Outrider feature next month, Wallace.

Dear Mike,

The Warp adaptation is coming along nicely. I hope the quality of this book extends throughout its life span, which, with issues like #6, should be quite long.

After re-reading the back-up stories and the Warp Special, I have come up with a few suggestions for plots. There are many possibilities to choose from.

but I would like to see:

1) Paragwen meet Skorbamtipmula.
2) The return of Sati.
3) Kuthalu, possibly with Valaria.
4) The origin of Symax.
5) Neal Adams!

Since Neal was art director for the plays, it would only be natural for him to work on the comic version.

So, in the immortal words of Stanley Presents, "put the plan into action!"

William Bovenzi
102½ Epworth Street
Worcester, MA 01610

Neal's got an open invitation over here, William, and we've told him as much. But, in addition to his chores in the advertising field, Neal's a bit backed up in his obligations to Pacific Comics. Hopefully, he'll be able to free up some time before too long.

As for the origin of Symax, listen, we aren't a Comics Code book, but some things just might be too disgusting even for First Comics!

The return of Paragwen, though ... that's a thought.

Warped Words:

At last the story gets a little interesting. Instead of Dr. Strange confronting Eternity, we find Chaos and Cumulus, or Night and Day, joining together to find Infinity ... sheesh. Someone should be ashamed of themselves. I'll reserve judgement until I've read the next two issues.

As I've said before, the back-up features in this book have always been better than the lead story. The Ditko trilogy was the best. I thought the Dogs of War would be just as good, what with Lenin Deisol and Bruce Patterson doing the visuals ... and the visuals were good. I liked some of the odd "camera" angles ... but the story started out with an interesting idea but then fell apart before it picked up much steam.

Oh, yes, my other complaint. You killed off Valaria! Or did you? At least in the main story ... where else in comicdom are you going to find such a repulsively seductive and wily creature? She makes even Sargon look like a pussy cat.

Despite the fact that I'm complaining a lot, you guys are, in my mind anyway, the best in the field.

Jon Turnbow
904 E. 5th Avenue
Olympia, WA 90501

Love to see the mail you send the other guys, Jon.

All kidding aside, we wish our readers would be a bit more vocal in their dislikes. There's always room for improvement, and being the new kids on the block, we want to hear the bad along with the good. So keep your comments coming!

NEXT MONTH: For Lord Cumulus, leaving means going back to Earth to come to terms with his late alter-ego, and to try and establish a relationship with his ex-fiance.

For Chaos, leaving means bolting — returning to the multi-dimensional city of Cynosure to start a new bid for godhood.

For Sargon, leaving means ignoring her own deepest emotions.

And for the Outrider, leaving means coming home ... to Fen-Ra!

"Diversions," by **Peter Gillis, Jerry Bingham** and **Mike Gustovich**, and "You Can't Go Home Again," by Gillis and **Lenin Deisol**. One month from now.

— Mike Gold

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